

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Federal Agency Name(s):** Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and National Ocean Service (NOS); National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); U.S. Department of Commerce
- **Funding Opportunity Title:** NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program
- **Announcement Type:** Initial Announcement
- **Funding Opportunity Number:**
- **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s):**
 - 11.419 - Coastal Zone Management
 - 11.426 - Financial Assistance for National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science
 - 11.441 - Regional Fishery Management Councils
 - 11.463 - Habitat Conservation
- **Dates:** Pre-applications must be received by NOAA by 11:59 p.m., Eastern Time, on December 10, 2004. Final applications must be received by NOAA by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time, on March 4, 2005.
- **Funding Opportunity Description:** The NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program, as authorized under the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, provides matching grants of financial assistance for coral reef conservation projects, with the exception of grants to Fishery Management Councils, which do not require match. The Program solicits proposals under six funding categories: State and Territory Coral Reef Management, State and Territory Coral Reef Ecosystem Monitoring; Coral Reef Ecosystem Research; General Coral Reef Conservation; Projects to Improve or Amend Coral Reef Fishery Management Plans; and International Coral Reef Conservation. Each funding category has specific applicant and project eligibility criteria.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

Pursuant to the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (Act), the Secretary of Commerce (Secretary), through the NOAA Administrator (Administrator), and subject to the availability of funds, is authorized to provide matching grants of financial assistance for coral reef conservation projects through the Coral Reef Conservation Program (Program). As such, the objective of the Program is to provide financial assistance for coral reef conservation projects consistent with the Act and “A National Coral Reef Action Strategy” (Strategy). A copy of the Strategy and the Act can be found at: <http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov/>.

B. Program Priorities

Pursuant to the Act, NOAA published the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program Implementation Guidelines (Guidelines) in the Federal Register Vol. 67, No. 76, page 19396, on Friday, April 19, 2002. The Guidelines can be also found at <http://www.coralreef.noaa.gov/>.

The Guidelines provide broad eligibility criteria, pursuant to Section 6403(g) of the Act, for coral reef conservation activities, and also created the following six program categories under the Program for awarding financial assistance:

1. State and Territory Coral Reef Management;
2. State and Territory Coral Reef Ecosystem Monitoring;
3. Coral Reef Ecosystem Research;
4. General Coral Reef Conservation;
5. Projects to Improve or Amend Coral Reef Fishery Management Plans; and,
6. International Coral Reef Conservation.

From year to year, specific priorities of the above listed program categories change due to Congressional appropriations and direction, and priorities of NOAA, the Program, and the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force. As such, each of the categories listed above has a correlating sub-section in the Attachment of this FFO, which describes the following specific requirements and criteria: program priorities, applicant and project eligibility, funding availability, application content and submission, application review and selection, and award administration.

Please Note: The Coral Reef Ecosystem Research Program mentioned here will solicit proposals through NOAA’s Undersea Research Program (NURP) on a different schedule and process than described in this Guidance. Applicants interested in submitting applications for coral research should consult Section 3. Coral Reef Ecosystem Research in the Attachment.

Applicants should thoroughly review sections I-VII and the six program categories described in the Attachment of this FFO to determine the categorical eligibility of their proposed activity and the respective proposal requirements.

All applications submitted pursuant to this FFO must be consistent with the requirements stated herein, the Guidelines and the Strategy. Applicants may also request copies of the Strategy

from the contacts listed below. Funding is subject to the availability of Federal appropriations.

C. Program Authority

Authority for the NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Grant Program is provided by Section 6403 (Coral Reef Conservation Program) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6401 *et seq*).

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability for FY2005

NOAA announces the availability of approximately \$5,590,000¹ of Federal assistance in FY 2005 for coral conservation activities, of which NOAA is providing approximately \$5,240,000 and Department of Interior (DOI) is providing approximately \$ 350,000.

These funds will be used to support financial assistance awards under the program categories listed in section I(B) above and describe in the Attachment, with the exception of the Coral Reef Ecosystem Research category which has both a separate timetable and funding. The amount of funds available, the application requirements, and the number of awards made under this FFO may vary. See specific program description in the Attachment for more information.

Selected applicants may be asked to revise award objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to submittal of the final application. The amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities, the project duration, and the specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD), and relevant NOAA staff.

B. Project/Award Period

Awards under this program will have either a 12 or 18 month project period. The specific project/award duration will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD), and relevant NOAA staff.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Recipients will enter into either a cooperative agreement or grant with the NOAA Office responsible for the program depending upon the amount of NOAA's involvement in the project. Substantial involvement means a cooperative agreement, while independent work requires a grant.

¹Please note that the funding amounts throughout this FFO are based on previous year's funding amounts. Funding will be subject to the availability of federal appropriations.

Examples of substantial involvement include:

1. Requirements that the appropriate NOAA official collaborate with the recipient by working jointly with a recipient scientist or technician in carrying out the scope of work;
2. Specify direction or redirection of the scope of work due to the relationships with other projects; and,
3. Review scope of work and closely monitor the program operations during the performance period.

Each of the six program categories under this FFO has specific information on the type of funding instrument. See the specific program descriptions in the Attachment for more information.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Each of the six program categories under this FFO has specific eligibility criteria. See the specific program descriptions in the Attachment for more information.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

With the exception of Section 5. Projects to Improve or Amend Coral Reef Fishery Management Plans, all program categories are subject to the matching fund requirements described below.

As per section 6403(b)(1) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, Federal funds for any coral conservation project funded under this Program may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the projects. Therefore, any coral conservation project under this program requires a 1:1 match. Matching funds must be from non-Federal sources and can include in-kind contributions and other non-cash support. NOAA strongly encourages applicants to leverage as much investment as possible. Federal funds may not be considered as matching funds.

As per section 6403(b)(2) of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, the NOAA Administrator may waive all or part of the matching requirement if the Administrator determines that the project meets the following two requirements;

1. No reasonable means are available through which an applicant can meet the matching requirement, and
2. The probable benefit of such project outweighs the public interest in such matching requirement.

Applicants must specify in their proposal the source and may be asked to provide letters of commitment to confirm stated match contributions. In the case of a waiver request, the applicant must provide a detailed justification explaining the need for the waiver including

attempts to obtain sources of matching funds, how the benefit of the project outweighs the public interest in providing match, and any other extenuating circumstances preventing the availability of match.

Notwithstanding any other provisions herein, and in accordance with 48 U.S.C. 1469a(d), the Program shall waive any requirement for local matching funds for any project under \$200,000 (including in-kind contribution) to the governments of Insular Areas, defined as the jurisdictions of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Please Note: eligible applicants choosing to apply 48 U.S.C. 1469a(d) should note the use and amount in the matching funds section of the respective application.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Specific information regarding the content for application submission is found in both Section IV. B. Content and Form of Application Submission below, as well as in the specific program description in the Attachment.

To request an Application Package (Federal financial assistance forms), please send request to: Jonathan Kelsey, 1305 East West Highway, 11th Floor, N/ORM3, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or telephone 301/713-3155 extension 230; or fax 301/713-4367.

The Federal financial assistance forms can also be obtained from the NOAA grants Website at <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~grants/pdf>.

Any administrative questions should also be addressed to Jonathan Kelsey (see above).

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

The application process required by this FFO requires both a pre-application and final application, subject to the submission dates and times listed in section IV.C. below. Applicants whose pre-applications are preliminarily selected for funding will be asked to submit a final application, which may require modifications or revisions.

Each pre-application and final application submitted in response to this FFO must include: 1) all specific application requirements listed in the relevant funding category description found in the Attachment of this FFO, and 2) a cover sheet with the following information:

- a. Project title;
- b. Applicant organization; nonprofit, university, government, etc.;
- c. Principal investigator or contact responsible for conducting the project;
- d. Contact information including address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail address;

- e. Program category (see Section I. Funding Opportunity Description above);
- f. Geographic location of the project (countries and sites, if appropriate);
- g. Amount of grant funds requested;
- h. Amount of matching funds provided; and,
- i. One paragraph project summary.

Please consult the relevant program description in the Attachment of this FFO to determine the additional requirements for the application. Federal financial assistance forms are not required to be submitted with the pre-application.

For applications submitted in electronic format, acceptable formats are limited to Adobe Acrobat (.PDF), WordPerfect or Microsoft Word files. All applications must meet the information and formatting requirements specified in this FFO.

Applicants whose pre-applications are preliminarily selected and choose to submit a final application, must submit a final Federal financial assistance award application package, including proposed projects and supporting documentation, as described in the relevant program descriptions below, and all required Federal financial assistance forms. The required Federal financial assistance forms SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, CD-511, CD-512, and if applicable, CD-346 and/or SF-LLL, can be requested by mail, by telephone, or by fax (see this Section IV. Address to Request Application Package above), or obtained from the NOAA grants Website at <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~grants/pdf>. Applicants are required to include one original and two copies of the signed, hard/paper of the Federal financial assistance forms for each final application package submitted.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received by NOAA by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the dates specified below. If the application is not received by NOAA by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on the dates specified below, the late application will not be reviewed or considered for FY 2005 funding.

If an applicant's pre-application is preliminarily selected and the applicant decides to submit the final application by electronic mail (e-mail), the applicant must also submit by surface mail, one original and two signed hard/paper copies of the Federal financial assistance forms along with the final application. Applicants should consider the delivery time when submitting their applications from international or remote areas.

The following review and selection timetable applies to all applications under the Program, except the Coral Reef Ecosystem Research Program:

Pre-applications due to NOAA - December 10, 2004

NOAA returns proposal comments to applicants - February 7, 2005

Final Applications due to NOAA - March 4, 2005

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications under the this program are not subject to Executive Order 12372, “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs”, except for General Coral Reef Conservation applications under the National Marine Fisheries Service.

E. Funding Restrictions

Each of the six program categories under this FFO may have specific funding restrictions. See specific program description in the Attachment for more information.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Pre-applications and final applications may be submitted by surface mail or e-mail. Submissions by e-mail are preferred. If submitting by surface mail, applicants are encouraged to include an electronic copy of the pre-application or final application on disk or cd.

Proposals must be submitted to: David Kennedy, NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program Coordinator, Office of Response and Restoration, N/ORR, Room 10102, NOAA National Ocean Service, 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Applications submitted by e-mail must be sent to coral.grants@noaa.gov.

Fax submittals will only be accepted for International Coral Reef Conservation applications, (Fax: 301-713-4389).

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Each of the six program categories under this FFO has specific evaluation criteria. See specific program description in the Attachment for more information.

B. Review and Selection Process

Each of the six program categories under this FFO has specific review and selection process criteria. See specific program description in the Attachment for more information.

C. Selection Factors

Each of the six program categories under this FFO has specific selection factors. See each specific program description in the Attachment for more information.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Subject to the availability of funds, final funding selection will be made and selected recipients notified on or before September 30, 2005. NOAA intends to provide funding to selected applicants no later than September 30, 2005. Projects should not be initiated in expectation of Federal funding until a notice of award document is received from NOAA Grants Management Division. Publication of this document does not obligate NOAA to award any specific project or obligate all or any part of the available funds.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notice

The NOAA Grants Officer will provide written notice of the award by postal mail to the appropriate business office of the recipient. Unsuccessful applications will be destroyed and not returned to the applicant. It is the goal of the NOAA Program Officer to also provide written notice to each unsuccessful applicant before September 30, 2005.

As previously mentioned, the Coral Reef Ecosystem Research Program will solicit applications through NOAA's Undersea Research Program (NURP) on a different schedule and process than described in this Guidance. Applicants interested in submitting applications for coral research should consult Section 3. Coral Reef Ecosystem Research.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Indirect Costs

The budget may include an amount for indirect costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the Federal government. Indirect costs are essentially overhead costs for basic operational functions (e.g., utilities, rent, insurance) that are incurred for common or joint objectives and, therefore, cannot be identified specifically within a particular project. For this solicitation, the Federal share of the indirect costs awarded will not exceed the lesser of either the indirect costs that the applicant would be entitled to if the negotiated Federal indirect cost rate were used or 25 percent of the Federal direct costs proposed. For those situations in which the use of the applicant's indirect cost rate would result in indirect costs greater than 25 percent of the Federal direct costs proposed, the difference may be counted as part of the non-Federal share. A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect cost agreement with the Federal Government must be included with the application. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate and plans to seek reimbursement for indirect costs, documentation necessary to establish a rate must be submitted within 90 days of receiving an award.

If an application is selected for funding, NOAA has no obligation to provide any additional prospective funding in connection with that award in subsequent years. Any

subsequent proposal to continue work on an existing project must be submitted to the competitive process for consideration and will not receive preferential treatment. Renewal of an award to increase funding or to extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of NOAA.

The recipients must comply with Executive Order 12906 regarding any and all geospatial data collected or produced under grants or cooperative agreements. This includes documenting all geospatial data in accordance with the Federal Geographic Data Committee Content Standard for digital geospatial data.

The Program uses only the existing NOAA Federal financial assistance awards package requirements per 15 CFR parts 14 and 24.

Executive Order 12866 - This action has been determined to be “not significant” for purposes of Executive Order 12866, Regulatory Planning and Review.”

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection-of-information, subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act, 44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq., unless that collection of information displays a currently valid OMB control number. Forms SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and SF-LLL and CD-346 have been approved by OMB under the respective control numbers 0348-0043, 0348-0044, 0348-0040, 0348-0046 and 0605-0001, respectively.

This notice also contains a collection-of-information requirement subject the Paperwork Reduction Act and which has been approved by OMB under control number 0648-0448. The public reporting burden is estimated to average one hour per response for comments on a proposed project from each agency with jurisdiction over coral reef ecosystems in the area where the project is to be conducted and one hour per response for a request for a waiver of matching funds. This estimate includes the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate, or any other aspect of these data collections, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the NOAA Office of Response and Restoration, N/ORR, National Ocean Service, 1305 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Notice and Comment are not required under 5 U.S.C. 553(a)(2), or any other law, for rules relating to public property, loans, grants, benefits or contract. Because notice and comment are not required, a regulatory flexibility analysis is not required and has not been prepared for this notice 5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of October 1, 2001 (66 FR 49917), as amended by the Federal Register notice published on October 30, 2002 (67 FR 66109), are applicable to this solicitation.

Limitation of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

OAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for applicant projects or proposals which are seeking NOAA federal funding opportunities. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website: <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including our NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/NAO216_6_TOC.pdf, and the Council on Environmental Quality implementation regulations, http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/regs/ceq/toc_ceq.htm). Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under their description of their program activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

In addition to providing specific information that will serve as the basis for any required impact analyses, applicants may also be requested to assist NOAA in drafting of an environmental assessment, if NOAA determines an assessment is required. Applicants will also be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying and implementing feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposal. The failure to do so shall be grounds for the denial of an application.

C. Reporting

Performance and Financial Reports - Recipients receiving funding will be required to submit

semiannual performance reports and copies of all products that are developed under the award. The specific information, products, or data contained in the performance report can be determined by the NOAA office responsible for the program and applicant in pre-award negotiations or, the recipient will submit performance reports according to the Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. Performance reports must be submitted to the NOAA office responsible for the program within 30 days after each semi-annual performance period.

Unless otherwise authorized, semi-annual financial reports will be submitted in accordance with the Department of Commerce, Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions to the Grants Officer at NOAA Grants Management Division.

VII. Agency Contacts

Administrative questions should be directed to Jonathan Kelsey, 301-713-3155, extension 230 or e-mail at jonathan.kelsey@noaa.gov.

Technical point of contact for State and Territory Coral Reef Management is Jonathan Kelsey, 301-713-3155, extension 230 or e-mail at jonathan.kelsey@noaa.gov.

Technical point of contact for State and Territory Coral Reef Ecosystem Monitoring is John Christensen, 301-713-3028, extension 153 or e-mail at john.christensen@noaa.gov.

Technical point of contact for Coral Reef Ecosystem Research is Kimberly Puglise, 301-713-2427, extension 199 or e-mail at kimberly.puglise@noaa.gov.

Technical point of contact for General Coral Reef Conservation is Andy Bruckner, 301-713-3459, extension 190 or e-mail at andy.bruckner@noaa.gov.

Technical point of contact for Projects to Improve or Amend Coral Reef Fishery Management Plans is Andy Bruckner, 301-713-3459, extension 190 or e-mail at andy.bruckner@noaa.gov.

Technical point of contact for International Coral Reef Conservation is Arthur Paterson, 301-713-3078, extension 217 or e-mail at arthur.e.paterson@noaa.gov.

For general information on NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program, contact Roger Griffis, 301-713-3989, extension 115 or e-mail at roger.b.griffis@noaa.gov.

Attachment

International Coral Reef Conservation

A. Funding Opportunity Description

1. Program Objective

The purpose of the International Coral Reef Conservation Program is to support the “National Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs” which calls on the United States “... to exercise global leadership in the international arena in shaping and developing environmentally sound and comprehensive coral reef policy, strengthen international conventions and foster strategic partnerships with other countries, international organizations and institutions, the public and private sectors, and non-governmental organizations to address international threats to coral reef ecosystems.”

2. Program Priorities

In FY 2005, the International program consists of the following four project categories:

1. Promote Watershed Management in the Wider Caribbean, Brazil, and Bermuda: The National Action Plan encourages the U.S. to "provide assistance in managing and conserving reef ecosystems and their watersheds." Further, the U.S. and its partners are launching the *White Water to Blue Water* Initiative presented at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. This Partnership emphasizes a cross-sectoral approach to marine resources management beginning with the upstream watershed and extending to the adjacent marine environment, comprising coral ecosystems, including those that may be found within marine protected areas. It is intended to help implement international agreements and programs, for example, the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment of the Wider Caribbean Region (the Cartagena Convention) and its three protocols (including The Protocol concerning Pollution from Land-based Sources and Activities), and the International Coral Reef Initiative. Therefore, IPO will fund activities that implement best management practices that reduce or control runoff to near shore coral reef ecosystems, including exemplary programs that prioritize marine protected areas and the conservation of biodiversity within watershed planning and management through the implementation of the NOAA/IUCN/WCPA principles and guidelines to incorporate marine protected areas into integrated ocean and coastal management (See <http://ipo.nos.noaa.gov/coralgrants.html>); assess effectiveness of these management practices; engage stakeholders and government agencies in collaborative partnerships to implement these practices; and recommend a set of best management practices that can be applied to small island Caribbean systems.

2. Enhance Management Effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs): The “National Action Plan” calls for strengthening the protection of resources within existing MPAs. NOAA has launched a strategic partnership with the World Conservation Union’s (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and World Wildlife Fund (WWF) International to improve the management of MPAs by providing managers, planners and other decision makers with methods for assessing the effectiveness of MPA sites. Therefore, IPO will fund activities in 2 subcategories at coral MPA sites that are building an adaptive management and evaluation program and will conduct an assessment of management effectiveness in order to strengthen and achieve the site goals and objectives. The first subcategory of the Management Effectiveness category will emphasize single site projects and the second subcategory will emphasize regional capacity building in the WCPA-Marine/WWF methodology.

3. Encourage Regional Approaches to Further No-Take Marine Reserves in the Wider Caribbean, Bermuda, Brazil, and Southeast Asia: The “National Action Plan” highlights the role that highly protected areas play in creating a network of coral marine protected areas for biodiversity, conservation and sustainable fisheries management. Through this program, IPO will fund regional level activities that benefit existing or proposed marine reserve networks of 2 or more sites in one or more countries. Preference will be given to projects that involve 2 or more countries. Furthermore, proposed regional level activities must address the needs of no-take marine reserves in the regions as identified in the WCPA - Marine Caribbean Regional Enhancement Plan and the WCPA-Marine Southeast Asia Regional Action Plan. The plans with the priority themes can be found at <http://ipo.nos.noaa.gov/coralgrants.html>.

4. Promote Socio-Economic Monitoring in Coral Reef Management in the Wider Caribbean, Brazil, Bermuda, East Africa, South Pacific, and Southeast Asia: The “National Action Plan” highlights that the human dimension is often overlooked in developing coral reef management strategies and calls for measures to enhance understanding of stakeholder benefits and resolve important user conflicts. Recognizing the importance of the human dimension, the GCRMN published The Socioeconomic Manual for Coral Reef Management, in partnership with NOAA, WCPA, and the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), a guide to conducting socioeconomic assessments of reef user groups. As follow-up, the GCRMN, WCPA-Marine and NOAA are working with ICLARM, the University of West Indies and other partners in the regions to develop socioeconomic monitoring programs specific to Southeast Asia and the Wider Caribbean. These regional programs include three key phases: (1) development of SocMon, i.e., standardized, simple socioeconomic monitoring guidelines for each region; (2) socioeconomic training workshops for reef managers to learn how to conduct SocMon, specifically how to establish socioeconomic monitoring programs at their sites; and, (3) establishment of socioeconomic monitoring programs at participants’ coral reef management programs. Under this project category, IPO will fund phase three - the establishment of socioeconomic monitoring programs at coral reef sites in the eligible regions. Proposals for such work must utilize the methodology in either the SocMon Caribbean Guidelines or the SocMon-Southeast Asia Guidelines. Both sets of Guidelines can be found at <http://ipo.nos.noaa.gov/coralgrants.html>.

3. Program Authority

Specific information on program authority can be found in Section I.C. Program Authority.

B. Award Information

1. Funding Availability

Approximately \$400,000 may be available in FY 2005 to support grants and cooperative agreements under this program. Approximately \$75,000-\$100,000 may be allocated to each of the four project categories listed below, with the following award ranges:

- a. Watershed Management: \$30,000-\$40,000
- b. Management Effectiveness:
 - (1) Single site projects: \$20,000-\$40,000
 - (2) Regional capacity building projects: \$80,000
- c. Marine Reserves: \$25,000 - \$40,000
- d. Socio-economic Monitoring: \$15,000 - \$25,000

Applications with requests over the limit of each category will not be accepted. Applications must be submitted under only ONE of the above mentioned categories. Funding will be subject to the availability of federal appropriations. Support in out-years after FY 2004 is contingent upon the availability of funds.

2. Project/Award Period

Applicants may submit applications covering a 12-to 18-month period with an anticipated start date of October 1, 2005.

3. Type of Funding Instrument

The NOS International Program Office will review applications for grants and cooperative agreements (see Section II. C. Type of Funding Instrument above for examples of substantial involvement).

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include all international, governmental, and non-governmental organizations. The proposed work must be conducted at a non-U.S. site and eligible countries are defined as follows. The Wider Caribbean includes the 37 States and territories that border the marine environment of the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea, and the areas of the Atlantic Ocean

adjacent thereto, and Brazil and Bermuda, but excluding areas under U.S. jurisdiction. The South Pacific Region includes South Pacific Regional Environment Program's 19 Pacific island countries and territories, including the Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, but excluding U.S. territories and four developed country members. Southeast Asia Region includes Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. East Africa includes Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, and South Africa.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Specific information to be submitted in regard to matching funds can be found in above Section III. B. Cost Sharing or Matching.”

3. Other Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility criteria is also contingent upon whether activities undertaken with respect to the application would be consistent with any applicable conditions or restrictions imposed by the U.S. government.

4. Project Specific Eligibility Criteria: Specific guidance for each International program project category is noted below:

a. Projects proposed under **"Promote Watershed Management in the Wider Caribbean, Brazil, and Bermuda"** must include:

- (1) Activities that support the implementation of the annexes of The Protocol concerning Pollution from Land Based Sources and Activities to the Cartagena Convention (for details, refer to <http://ipo.nos.noaa.gov/coralgrants.html>);
- (2) Activities that support NOAA/IUCN/WCPA principles and guidelines to incorporate marine protected areas into integrated ocean and coastal management (See: <http://ipo.nos.noaa.gov/coralgrants.html>)
- (3) Letter of support for the proposed project from the government agency responsible for planning and development;
- (4) Project site that includes near shore fringing reef system (with description of project site uniqueness) that is impacted by agricultural runoff or intensive land-based development associated with tourism sector activities;
- (5) Evidence of local stakeholder support, for example, agricultural businesses, NGOs, tourism sector, and port facilities;
- (6) Demonstration of local or national potential for developing enforceable policies and mechanisms for long term watershed management; and,
- (7) Evidence of potential organizational capacity to promote coordination of governmental agencies and stakeholder involvement.

b. Projects proposed under "**Enhance Management Effectiveness of Marine Protected Areas**" will be considered under two subcategories:

(1) Single site projects that must:

- i) Incorporate the approach being developed by the WCPA-Marine/WWF International MPA Management Effectiveness Initiative. The approach can be found in the working draft of *How is Your MPA Doing? Guidebook for Evaluating Effectiveness of MPA's* posted at <http://effectiveMPA.noaa.gov>;
- ii) Have a management program in place, including a management plan, on-site staff, and infrastructure to carry out effectiveness assessments;
- iii) Implement a comprehensive assessment at each MPA represented in the project, utilizing the guidebook, including use of indicators from each of the biophysical, socioeconomic and governance categories;
- iv) Demonstrate the intent to incorporate the assessment of indicators into management planning and review process and incorporate assessment results in adaptive management; and,
- v) Include a letter of support for the project from the MPA managing authority or site supervisor that also demonstrates the involvement of the authority/supervisor in the project if the agency is not proposing the work.

(2) Regional capacity building projects, including at least 3 MPA sites, that must:

- i) Conduct regional capacity building, including a training workshop, in the Management Effectiveness methodology developed by the WCPA-Marine/WWF International MPA Management Effectiveness Initiative. The approach can be found in the publication *How is Your MPA Doing? Guidebook for Evaluating Effectiveness of MPA's* posted at <http://effectiveMPA.noaa.gov>.
- ii) Have a management program in place at each MPA site, including a management plan, on-site staff, and infrastructure to carry out effectiveness assessments;
- iii) Implement a comprehensive assessment at each MPA represented in the project, utilizing the guidebook, including use of indicators from each of the biophysical, socioeconomic and governance categories;
- iv) Demonstrate the intent to incorporate the assessment of indicators into management planning and review process at each MPA site represented in the project and incorporate assessment results in adaptive management;

v) Include a letter of support for the project from each of the MPA managing authorities or site supervisors represented in the project, that also demonstrates the involvement of the authority/supervisor in the project if the agency is not proposing the work, and.

c. Projects proposed under **"Encourage Regional Approaches to Further No-Take Marine Reserves in the Wider Caribbean, Brazil, Bermuda, and Southeast Asia"** must:

- (1) Follow the themes of the Caribbean Regional Coordination Plan and the Southeast Asia Regional Action Plan posted at <http://ipo.nos.noaa.gov/coralgrants.html>;
- (2) Benefit 2 or more potential or existing marine reserve sites in one or more countries in the region;
- (3) Involve managers from the reserves or the management authority of the site; and,
- (4) Include letters of support for the project from the marine reserve management authorities from all sites that are involved in the project.

d. Projects proposed under **"Promote Socio-Economic Monitoring in Coral Reef Management in the Wider Caribbean, Brazil, Bermuda, East Africa, South Pacific, and Southeast Asia "** must:

- (1). Demonstrate a link with an existing or planned marine resource management program (e.g., MPA, fisheries management, or coastal management program) with clearly defined socioeconomic goals as suggested in the SocMon Guidelines (e.g., improve livelihood, increase environmental awareness);
- (2) Include a letter of support for the project from the marine resource management authority;
- (3) Describe the plan for socioeconomic monitoring, including preparatory activities, data collection and analysis and long-term monitoring after the first assessment. For Southeast Asia sites, the plan should reflect the variables and methods in the SocMon-Southeast Asia Guidelines. For the Wider Caribbean sites, the plan should reflect the variables and methods in SocMon-Caribbean Guidelines. Both SocMon-Caribbean and Southeast Asia Guidelines can be found at <http://ipo.nos.noaa.gov/coralgrants.html>;
- (4) Include a social scientist that will be actively engaged in the socioeconomic monitoring, planning, data collection, and analysis either from staff or elsewhere (e.g., local university);
- (5) Demonstrate involvement of coral management staff in the proposed monitoring even if personnel not engaged in site-management are overseeing the monitoring; and,

(6) Explain how the assessment team will translate the socioeconomic data into useful information for coral reef managers and decision makers (e.g., making written management recommendations to policy makers or managers, and presenting results and recommendations to management staff and other stakeholders).

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package

Specific information regarding the address for application submission can be found in above Section IV. A. Address to Request Application Package

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Specific information regarding the required cover sheet for application submission can be found in above Section IV. B. Content and Form of Application Submission above. International pre-applications may be submitted by e-mail, fax (301-713-4389), or express air courier and must be received by NOAA on or before the date established in Section IV. C. Submission Dates and Times above. Each application must clearly describe the proposed work in 20 pages or less, including letters of support and attachments. Font size should be 12 point. Applications should not be bound or stapled, but can be bundled, for example, by rubber bands or binder clips. All applications, letters of support and attachments must be written in the English Language. In addition to the cover sheet, each application must include the following elements (a-c):

- a. Description of the qualifications of the individual(s) who will conduct the project;
- b. Project Description that must address the specific project category eligibility criteria described in this International section under Section C. 4. Project Specific Eligibility Criteria above and also include:
 - (1) Project need;
 - (2) Objectives;
 - (3) Implementation strategy;
 - (4) Identification of how project fits into applicant (and site) strategy for management;
 - (5) Project products and outcomes;
 - (6) Partner justification and roles;
 - (7) A methodology to evaluate the success of the project;
 - (8) A Summary Budget that includes a detailed breakdown of costs following the categories on the Federal Form 424A for both the Federal and non-Federal shares as they relate to specific aspects of the project. Also include an appropriate justification in a narrative for both the federal and non-Federal shares. Intended sources of matching funds and whether they have been secured must be stated in the application. The application must also state whether the

project has been submitted for funding consideration elsewhere. Applicants whose applications are recommended for funding will be required to submit with the final application, letter(s) of commitment to fund from the organization(s) providing matching funds; and,

(9) Task timetable with interim benchmarks linked to clearly defined work projects.

c. Evidence of support for the project from the local management authority where the work is conducted at specific sites must indicate that the project supports local management objectives. In those cases where training is proposed, indication that participants will apply these techniques at their local sites is requested. Please include evidence of coordination with relevant national and regional project partners, including a list of agencies consulted in developing the proposal and assurances that any necessary permits will be secured prior to the use of U.S. Federal funds.

3. Submission Dates and Times

Specific information regarding the dates and times of application submission can be found in Section IV. C. Submission Dates and Times above

4. Intergovernmental Review

Specific information regarding Intergovernmental Review can be found in Section IV. D. Intergovernmental Review above

5. Funding Restrictions

Eligibility is also contingent upon whether activities undertaken with respect to the application would be consistent with any applicable conditions or restrictions imposed by the U.S. government.

6. Other Submission Requirements

Specific information regarding other submission requirements can be found in Section IV. F. Other Submission Requirements above.

E. Application Review Information

1. Evaluation Criteria

Once a full application has been received by NOAA, an initial administrative review is conducted to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the application. IPO will provide for a merit-based peer review and standardized documentation of that review for proposals that meet the eligibility requirements. Each application will be reviewed by a minimum of three

individuals with knowledge of the subject of the proposal. Each reviewer will submit a separate and individual review and reviewers will not provide a consensus opinion. The identities of the peer reviewers will be kept anonymous to the degree permitted by law. Each reviewer will individually evaluate and rank proposals using the evaluation criteria provided below. The merit reviewers' ratings are used to produce a rank order of the proposals.

- a. Importance and/or relevance and applicability of proposed project to the program goals (25%): This ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state, or local activities. For this competition, the proposal should demonstrate the need for the proposed coral reef management activity to fill gaps in the jurisdiction.
- b. Technical/scientific merit (25%): This assesses whether the approach is technically sound and/or innovative, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear project goals and objectives for this management activity.
- c. Overall qualifications of applicants (20%): This ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to accomplish the project. For this competition, the proposal should demonstrate coordination with applicable ongoing local, state, territorial, and Federal coral reef management activities;
- d. Project costs (20%): The Budget is evaluated to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project needs and time-frame. For this competition, the budget should reflect the ability of the work to be completed for the funding and timing proposed.
- e. Outreach and education (10%): NOAA assesses whether this project provides a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the Nation's natural resources.

NOAA may also request and consider written comments on proposed projects from agencies with jurisdiction over coral reef ecosystems in the area where the project is to be conducted, as described in Section X(1) of the Guidelines. Under the international grant program, NOAA will request and consider written comments on the proposal from relevant U.S. government agencies such as the Agency for International Development and Department of the Interior; foreign governments and their coral management agencies; and other international entities as necessary. Each entity will be provided 21 days to review and comment on subject proposals. Comments submitted will be part of the public record.

2. Review and Selection Process

IPO will review the applications, consistent with the equally weighted criteria listed in Section X(3) of the Guidelines, taking into consideration comments received from peer, agency, and jurisdiction reviewers. Based on these reviews, IPO will rank order the applications, and provide

preliminary funding recommendations, and summary comments on each selected proposal to each applicant. These comments will include input from peer reviewers, agencies, jurisdictions, and IPO, and are intended to be used in the applicant's development of the final proposal. Upon receipt of the final application, complete with the requisite Federal forms, IPO will review the complete package and make final funding recommendations based on the incorporation of, and response to, comments that were returned to the applicant. IPO will submit these funding recommendations to the NOAA review panel for final review, pursuant to Section X(4) of the Guidelines to ensure that the Coral Reef Conservation Act requirements for geographic funding distribution and consistency with the overall program goals outlined in the Strategy. In making the final selections, the Selecting Official will award in rank order unless the proposal is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the selection factors listed below. The Program Officials and/or Selecting Official may negotiate the funding level of the proposal. The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for award to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds.

3. Selection Factors for Projects

In addition to the to equally weighted criteria described in Section X(3) of the Guidelines and comments received from peer reviewers, the following selection factors will be used:

1. Availability of funding
2. Balance/distribution of funds:
 - a. Geographically
 - b. By type of institutions
 - c. By type of partners
 - d. By research areas
 - e. By project types
3. Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies
4. Program priorities and policy factors. These are listed in International Sections A.1, A.2 and C.4 above.
5. Applicant's prior award performance
6. Partnerships and/or Participation of targeted groups

The Program Officer and/or Selecting Official may negotiate the funding level of the proposal. The Selecting Official makes final recommendations for award to the Grants Officer who is authorized to obligate the funds. If insufficient eligible projects are received, NOAA may reallocate residual funds from this program area to a different funding category under the Program.

4. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Specific information regarding anticipated announcement and award dates can be found in Section V. D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates above.

F. Award Administration Information

1. Award Notice

Specific information regarding award notices can be found above in Section IV. F. Other Submission Requirements.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Specific information regarding administrative and national policy requirements can be found above in Section VI. B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

3. Reporting

Specific information regarding reporting requirements can be found above in Section VI. C. Reporting.

G. Agency Contact(s)

Technical point of contact for International Coral Reef Conservation is Arthur Paterson, 301-713-3078, extension 217 or e-mail at arthur.e.paterson@noaa.gov.